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ABSTRACT

The process by which Irish-speaking regions became English-speaking regions over a period of centuries is examined. The first part argues that schooling played far less of a role in the shift than some scholars have suggested, because schools were not structured to be particularly effective in teaching the second language (English) to Irish-speakers and because 1851 census data suggest widespread illiteracy among Irish-English bilinguals. The second part considers the role that migratory labor may have played in the shift, based on documented demographic patterns and research in other languages supporting this influence in language shift. Excerpts from individual accounts from history are used as illustration. The third part considers whether the diffusion of English in Ireland constitutes pidginization or creolization. Phonological/phonetic and morphological characteristics of Hiberno-English are examined in this context. It is concluded that while aspects of both pidginization and creolization processes are evident, this form of language mixing is unique. Contains 75 references. (MSE)

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TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

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Hiberno-English: pidgin, creole, or neither?

Terence Odlin

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CLCS Occasional Paper No.49
Spring 1997

Hiberno-English: pidgin, creole, or neither?

by

Terence Odlin

0 Introduction

Although scholars have studied Hiberno-English for over a century, it has received an increasing amount of attention in recent years. The vernacular English of Ireland has interested not only specialists in the history and dialectology of English, but also creolists (e.g., Winford 1993), students of second language acquisition (e.g., Duff 1993), folklorists (e.g., O'Dowd 1991), and literary critics (e.g., Hirsch 1983/1988). It is no exaggeration to say that Ireland offers one of the best research sites to study certain types of linguistic and cultural change: indeed, investigators such as Thomason and Kaufmann (1988) have seen Irish English as one of the most promising modern cases of a kind of "language shift" once more common, the shift here being the near-extinction of Irish as a community language and the concomitant adoption of English. In effect, studies of such a shift offer valuable hints about processes at work in earlier contact situations, such as the spread of Semitic languages in Ethiopia and Indo-European languages in India.

Considerable work has been done on the structure, variation, and history of Hiberno-English (e.g., Henry 1957, Braidwood 1964, Bliss 1979, Harris 1984a, Filppula 1986, Kallen 1995). However, many important aspects of Hiberno-English remain only vaguely understood. One especially important question is how speakers of Irish came to learn English. The shift from a Celtic to a Germanic language did not happen overnight: over four centuries of bilingualism were required. This long span of time naturally complicates any attempts to understand the dynamics of the shift. Yet despite the long span and despite the fact we cannot know all the individual histories of the many Irish

speakers who learned English, it is possible to study widespread trends and arrive at generalizations that will hold true for many individuals in many places.

This paper is thus an attempt to formulate some viable generalizations about how the shift from Irish to English took place. The first part of the paper argues that schooling played far less of a role in the shift than some scholars have suggested. The next part considers the role that migratory labour played: there is abundant evidence that migrations from Irish-speaking to English-speaking regions had a major impact on Gaeltachts (i.e., Irish-speaking regions). That evidence provides the basis for discussion in the next part of the paper, which looks at what the facts can say about the theoretical relation between language shift and patterns of language contact known as pidginization and creolization.

1 How was Hiberno-English learned?

The question of how Irish speakers came to acquire English has not been studied in much detail. The most common (though not the only) explanation is that Irish-speaking children went to school and learned their English there. The following passage from Ó Cuív (1986, p.381) shows the usual thinking in such explanations:

> The utility of the English language had become generally recognized [...]. It was in such circumstances that parents were at pains to ensure that their children learned English. One of the instruments used in this connection was the "tally stick" which was hung about a scholar's neck and was notched every time he spoke Irish, each notch earning chastisement. [...] It is not surprising, then, that when catholic elementary and secondary schools began to be established about the beginning of the nineteenth century, Irish was generally given little place in them...In effect the advent of general education in the nineteenth century was a major factor in the decline of Irish.

Ó Cuív's observations are similar to those of de Fréine (1965, 1977), Henry (1977), Bliss (1977), and Leith (1983), as well as those in the companion volume to the popular television series *The Story of English* (McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil 1986, p.183). Such observations no doubt have a factual basis: Ó Cuív and others cite accounts from the 18th and 19th century to show how schools often discouraged Irish speaking and how even patriots such as Daniel O'Connell considered it prudent

to learn English at the expense of Irish.

Although schooling certainly played a part in the spread of English, accounts such as Ó Cuív's exaggerate this role. One problem is that such accounts assume that schools were as effective in teaching English as they were in discouraging Irish. Accounts of education in 19th century Ireland make this assumption questionable. No one even vaguely familiar with Irish history will be surprised to find the widespread poverty of the country reflected in the schools, where attendance was often low, textbooks few, and teachers poorly educated (cf. Balfour 1898, Odlin 1991a). Under such conditions, one may indeed wonder how many teachers actually succeeded in meeting the challenge which second language teaching entails. One personal account, from Michael MacGowan (1962), an Irish speaker from a Gaeltacht in County Donegal, probably speaks for many other schoolchildren:

> But if I hadn't a word of English, I'd say the master hadn't a word of Irish...There was the master tearing away at a great rate and he would spend long periods teaching Latin to those who had English. He didn't worry himself much about us [Irish speakers] and whatever learning I got on my tongue—and I tell you that wasn't much—I'd say that was in spite of him and in spite of myself that I learned it. (p.14)

Even if MacGowan managed to learn a bit more than the quotation indicates (cf. section 2), the conditions he encountered at school were clearly lamentable. Those conditions are not, however, the strongest argument against the claim that schools were the principal agent in the shift from Irish to English. An even more compelling argument is seen in census data from the mid-19th century on language and literacy. The census of 1851 indicates two key facts: 1) that Irish/English bilingualism was quite common in Gaeltachts throughout Ireland; 2) that illiteracy was also common in these regions. This information makes it possible to determine whether in many Gaeltachts there were large numbers of bilinguals who were illiterate. As the following discussion indicates, there were indeed large numbers. Accordingly, the argument for the importance of schools in fostering bilingualism is weak, unless one wished to argue that schools succeeded in teaching English even when they did not succeed in teaching literacy.

The 1851 census does not speak directly to the number of illiterate bilinguals. However, it does provide figures on the number of monolingual and bilingual speakers of Irish as well as figures on the number

of people able to read or to read and write. With such figures only a little arithmetic is necessary to estimate the number of illiterate bilinguals. Such estimates will be unrealistically low, however, unless other work on Irish census data is taken into account. Fitzgerald (1984) and other investigators have considered the estimates for Irish speakers to be rather inaccurate not only in the 1851 census but also in some of the later ones. Accordingly, the following discussion of language and literacy in County Mayo uses adjusted estimates of the total number of Irish speakers and not simply the numbers provided by the 1851 census.

Table 1 shows the number of bilinguals for each barony of County Mayo. In the barony of Clanmorris; for example, the total population was 19,784 and the monolingual Irish-speaking population was 1,881, both of these figures coming from the 1851 census. The total Irish-speaking population is estimated to be 18,399, a figure which comes from multiplying the total population by 93%, this percentage being Fitzgerald's estimate of the number of Irish-speaking individuals in

	A	B	C (A x B)	D	E (C - D)
	Total	% Irish 1831-1841	Irish	Mono-lingual	Bilingual
Burrishoole	24,728	93	22,997	4,654	18,343
Carra	32,687	83	27,130	3,875	23,255
Clanmorris	19,784	93	18,399	1,881	16,518
Costello	43,210	95	41,050	5,309	35,741
Erris	19,630	96	18,845	8,510	10,335
Gallen	34,327	97	33,297	6,289	27,008
Kilmaine	30,983	92	28,504	10,258	18,246
Murrisk	24,983	69	17,238	1,476	15,762
Tirawley	44,167	84	37,100	7,012	30,088

Table 1
Estimates for number of bilinguals for the baronies of County Mayo

Clanmorris born between 1831 and 1841. The reason this cohort was chosen is that it allows for a conservative but plausible estimate of the number of Irish speakers: if the youngest cohort were chosen (i.e., 1841-1851), the estimate of Irish speakers might be too low, while if an older cohort were chosen, the estimate might be too high. The estimate of the bilingual population (i.e., 16,518) comes simply from subtracting the number of monolinguals from the estimated total of Irish-speaking individuals.

Table 2 combines literacy information with figures from Table 1 to estimate the number of illiterate bilinguals. In the case of Clanmorris, the figure of 4,673 is the sum of census figures on literacy in the first two columns. That total is then subtracted from the estimate of 16,518 bilinguals from Table 1. The estimated number of illiterate bilinguals, 11,845, constitutes 71.7% of the estimated bilingual population. This figure is somewhat conservative since it assumes that the only literate people in Clanmorris were bilinguals. In all likelihood, there were many literate individuals in the 7% of the population that did not speak Irish, in which case the number of illiterate bilinguals would be even higher.[1] Even so, the estimate of 11,845 indicates that bilingualism without

	A	B	C	D	E	F
			(A + B)		(D - C)	(E / D)
	Read & Write	Read Only	Literate	Bilin ual	Biling. Illit.	%
Burrishoole	3,333	2,887	6,220	18,343	12,123	66.1
Carra	5,086	3,701	8,787	23,255	14,468	62.2
Clanmorris	2,945	1,728	4,673	16,518	11,845	71.7
Costello	6,656	3,127	9,783	35,741	25,958	72.6
Erris	2,011	1,208	3,219	10,335	7,116	68.9
Gallen	4,851	3,671	8,522	27,008	18,486	68.5
Kilmaine	3,429	1,810	5,239	18,246	13,007	71.3
Murrisk	4,202	2,948	7,150	15,762	8,612	54.6
Tirawley	7,046	4,716	11,762	30,088	18,326	60.9

Table 2
Estimates of illiterate bilinguals for the baronies of County Mayo

literacy was the norm and that bilingual individuals who could not read or write constituted the majority population in this barony of 19,784 people.

County Mayo was not unique in having large numbers of illiterate bilinguals. Similar estimates have been published for County Galway (Odlin 1994a), and the figures in the 1851 census suggest that the situation was not very different in Counties Clare, Kerry, Cork, and Waterford, as well in some baronies of other counties (e.g., Donegal) with large Gaeltachts. Accordingly, there is little support for the claim that in the mid-19th century the acquisition of English by Irish speakers resulted largely from schooling. It is even less probable that schools played a major role before that time. There were fewer schools, and for a considerable period in the 18th century the authorities often tried to enforce leglislation against teaching any subject to Irish Catholics. Although the well-known "hedge schools" that arose despite such bans provided education to some Catholics, these opportunities did not affect the majority of schoolchildren (Odlin 1991a).

While accounts such as Ó Cuív's exaggerate the role of schools, there remains the question of what the crucial factors were in the shift to English. Childhood bilingualism no doubt played an important role: it may well be that many of the illiterate bilinguals were born into families of bilinguals. Still, this explanation cannot account for three interrelated questions: 1) how monoglot Irish families became families with one or more bilinguals; 2) how communities that were largely or exclusively monolingual became bilingual; 3) how speakers such as Michael MacGowan acquired English. With regard to the first two questions, one cannot invoke an infinite regress of families and communities that had bilinguals—at some point, at least one monolingual had to become bilingual. In many Gaeltachts in the mid-19th century, the monoglot Irish population was still considerable. In the barony of Erris in County Mayo, monolingual speakers of Irish constituted nearly half of the 1851 population, as seen in Table 1, and in some baronies of County Galway, Irish monoglots were the majority (Odlin 1994a). In earlier generations, the percentage of monoglots was certainly higher, and so it seems inevitable that adults or older children must have been the first bilinguals in many families. The third question is certainly answerable in the case of Michael MacGowan. His memoir makes it clear that he acquired English largely in the course of his childhood and adult experiences as a worker in Ulster and Scotland. Although he may not be typical of all bilinguals in Ireland, his account gives

insights into the importance of migratory labour in the spread of English, and it will therefore be described in the next section. No doubt other factors besides migratory labour contributed to the language shift, but considerable evidence suggests that looking at itinerant workers can contribute much toward understanding how bilingualism spread to families having little or no education.

2 Seasonal migrations and the acquisition of English

The idea that migratory labour played a major role in the spread of English is not new. Almost 50 years ago, Brendan Adams made such a claim although it was restricted to just one part of one county:

> The Scottish tinge often heard in the more northerly part of the speech of the Donegal Gaeltacht, where many people, among the older generation, at any rate, first learnt the language as a result of seasonal migration to the Scottish lowlands, would seem to be entirely absent here [in the southern part of Donegal].
>
> (Adams 1950/1986, p.98)

Adams's observation is corroborated in a study by Ní Ghallchóir (1981) of bilingualism in a region of northern Donegal (cf. section 3.2). Moreover, nearly a century ago John Millington Synge commented on an Aran islander who spoke English fluently, which was "due, I believe, to the months he spent in the English provinces working at the harvest when he was a young man" (1907/1982 p.61). As will be seen in the following discussion, these claims have considerable support from a variety of sources. Moreover, although the literature on migratory labour is fragmentary, the evidence suggests that many regions besides northern Donegal and the Aran Islands were transformed linguistically by effects of seasonal migrations. Before those effects are considered, however, it will help to look at a somewhat similar case of linguistic diffusion which took place in the South Pacific in the same century.

2.1 The spread of Melanesian Pidgin English

In the early part of the 19th century, English had not yet made much of an impact among speakers of Oceanic languages according to Keesing (1988). By the end of the 20th century, however, English-based pidgins and creoles are common through much of the Pacific. Even though many specialists would not consider contact varieties such as Tok Pisin in New Guinea or Bislama in Vanuatu to be English, the type

of diffusion that led to these varieties resembles what happened in Ireland in a number of ways. First, some of these contact varieties now have native speakers: although Tok Pisin and Bislama are still common as second languages, they have become household languages for many people (Holm 1989). Second, these contact varieties show some clear instances of substrate influence (Keesing 1988). Finally, and most importantly for this paper, these varieties show English superstrate influence which did not come about from schooling.

Keesing (1988) provides a detailed account of the introduction of English to the South Pacific and the subsequent development of a pidgin (which he does not consider to be English, as will be discussed below). Although English speakers had travelled through the Pacific as early as Sir Francis Drake, it was not until the mid-19th century that contacts between islanders and English speakers became intensive enough to lead to any widespread second language acquisition. The rapid growth of the sandalwood trade in the 1840s led to numerous contacts in the Loyalty Islands, and Keesing cites various historical sources indicating that islanders often found jobs aboard ships where they learned English and, in some cases, came to speak it quite fluently. After the time these islanders spent on ships and in English-speaking ports such as Sydney and San Francisco, they became quite familiar with Western culture. The sandalwood trade marked only the beginning of intensive language contact. As plantations for cotton and sugar developed, the need for workers grew and led to what is known as the Labour Trade. This need put the Loyalty Islanders in an advantageous position:

> by the time plantations were established in New Caledonia and subsequently in Fiji and Queensland, the sophisticated and adventuresome Loyalty Islanders wanted little part in the back-breaking toil of indentured labour in the fields: it was they who, as cultural brokers and sophisticated travelers of the southwestern Pacific and beyond, acted as middlemen in recruiting their Melanesian cousins from the New Hebrides and later the Solomons. Their role in the dissemination of a developing pidgin into the central and northern New Hebrides and Solomons must have been crucial.
>
> (Keesing 1988, p.29)

Keesing considers *Melanesian Pidgin English* to be a misnomer and argues instead for *Melanesian Pidgin*. More than just a terminological nuance is at stake here, and the controversy is relevant for many other

language contact situations including Hiberno-English. Keesing stresses his belief that before 1850 the target of the ongoing second language acquisition was indeed English, but he believes that after 1850 the situation was changing:

> a generation of Pacific Islanders from the Gilberts, Rotuma, Fiji, the Loyalties, and Polynesia born in 1850's and early 1860's was crucial in the expansion and stabilization of a Pacific pidgin.
>
> (Keesing, 1988, p.94)

According to Keesing, this was a generation of pidgin speakers who, presumably, had encountered Loyalty Islanders able to speak English from the time of the sandalwood trade in the 1840s. No doubt there were considerable differences between the linguistic models provided after 1860 by islanders, on the one hand, and models provided by native speakers of English on the other. For Keesing, these differences amounted to "two quite different target languages coexisting in the Pacific", and he calls into question any assumption that "throughout the 19th century speakers of pidgin were *trying to learn English*" (ibid., emphasis in the original). In his judgment, the target language was a pidgin which both islanders and native speakers of English were trying to learn (ibid., p.95). Even so, some islanders were

> more sophisticated in terms of their experience in speech communities where standard English was the common linguistic coin [and they] had one register for interacting in that world and another for interacting in the social world of fellow Islanders (in which native English speakers were marginal participants). (ibid., p.95)

This claim that two target languages coexisted allows Keesing to account for the great difference between Melanesian Pidgin and English as used by native speakers. Nevertheless, the two-target analysis entails serious problems, some of which are relevant to the question of whether Hiberno-English was ever a pidgin or creole. One difficulty is that Keesing's terminology is inconsistent. While he wants the pidgin to be regarded as a language in its own right, he characterizes knowledge of pidgin and knowledge of standard English as "registers" (as the last block quotation indicates), a term normally used to describe variations *within* a language. Another problem is that the logic of Keesing's analysis calls for three, instead of two, target languages. It is implausible that standard English was the only variety which islanders had access to: creolists have often recognized the importance of nonstandard

varieties of native and non-native speakers aboard ships (e.g., Holm 1986, Bailey and Ross 1988).

The two inconsistencies just cited pose difficulties for Keesing's analysis, but problems even more serious arise from the judgments of the participants in the contact situation:

> For well over a century in the Pacific, Islanders have regarded the prevailing pidgin as English (for most, the only version of it to which they had access); and Europeans have regarded it as a bastardized form of English. (Keesing 1988, p.95)

For Keesing, these judgments are misguided: according to him, the reality is that "Oceanic speakers and English speakers were analyzing and producing mutually acceptable sentences using different grammars" (ibid., p.91). By this analysis, then, the communication that took place involved speakers using two different languages, Melanesian Pidgin and English. However, such an analysis leads to difficulties. One is the preponderance of English lexical items in the pidgin, a fact which Keesing acknowledges (ibid., p.96). If English was *not* the target language, a question arises as to why more Oceanic words did not find their way into the pidgin. The preponderance of English words was not inevitable even though creolists have sometimes tried to minimize the importance of the superstrate lexicon (cf. Baker 1990, Odlin 1991b). A second problem with Keesing's argument is that it undervalues the significance of the participants' own judgments. Although "folk" representations of language are often inaccurate, they nevertheless have an important influence on what is acquired in a second language and how it is acquired (Odlin 1986, 1989, 1994b, Birdsong 1989). Still another problem with Keesing's approach is that it does not really distinguish pidginization from other contact situations. As the discussion to follow suggests, one can just as plausibly argue that native speakers of English and non-native speakers in 19th century Ireland were using different grammars to communicate. In view of difficulties of the two-target analysis, the terminology used henceforth will be *Melanesian Pidgin English* instead of *Melanesian Pidgin*.

Although the two-target analysis proposed by Keesing is unrealistic, some of his positions do seem more plausible. It is probably true, as he suggests, that islanders played a more important role in the formation of the contact vernacular than did Europeans, whose scorn of the pidgin no doubt led to misperceptions. The outcome of the pidginization process was certainly different from any standard or non-standard variety

of English spoken in other parts of the world. Moreover, the position Keesing takes on substrate influence is persuasive: he offers considerable evidence for the influence of Oceanic languages on verb phrases, pronoun paradigms, and other structures in the developing pidgin. Even though Hiberno-English differs in its history and structure, the resemblances to the ontogeny of Melanesian Pidgin English are striking.

2.2 Migratory labour in 19th-century Ireland

Although there are problems in reconstructing the sociolinguistic context of bilingual Ireland in the early and mid-19th century, enough evidence exists to indicate some important similarities with the diffusion of English in the South Pacific. First, large numbers of Irish speakers were involved in migrations comparable to the Labour Trade just described. Second, bilingual middlemen seem to have played an important role in this trade. Third, Hiberno-English shows ample traces of substrate influence. All three of these points will be discussed in the remainder of the paper, along with larger issues concerning pidginization, creolization, and language contact.

Migratory labour from Irish to English-speaking areas did not begin in the 19th century: evidence from as early as the 15th century indicates that Irish were wandering through England (O'Dowd 1991). Moreover, the establishment of English-speaking towns in Ireland eventually led to permanent migrations from rural Gaeltachts. Place names such as the *Irish Quarter* in Carrickfergus indicate that rural migrants found work with English and Scottish settlers. Comparable neighborhoods are recorded in place names in other cities (e.g., Dublin and Omagh), and by the time of the 1659 census there is evidence that outlying areas of many towns had mixtures of English and Irish speakers (Kallen 1995). Such mixtures do not necessarily imply bilingual populations, but such an inference is more than just plausible. Bliss (1979) analyses an 18th-century caricature of a bilingual who appears to be from the Irish Quarter of Carrickfergus (cf. Odlin 1995, p.21). No doubt the search for work in towns induced many Irish speakers to learn whatever English they could.

While towns and, presumably, their bilingual populations grew, the vast majority Irish speakers remained in rural areas. In large parts of Connaught and Munster, the impetus to seek work away from home seems to have increased considerably from the late 18th century onwards. Between 1780 and 1840 the population of Ireland exploded,

going from roughly three million to over eight million (Freeman 1957). As O'Dowd (1991, p.5) observes,

> conditions were ripe for the disaster which occurred in the 1840's. Subdivision of holdings had proceeded at an alarming rate [...] as tilleage acreages expanded. The holdings subsequently became unviable and alternative sources of income were sought. Leaving the family home and working elsewhere was one solution and numbers of seasonal and temporary workers increased at a rapid rate in the decade after the Napoleonic wars.

By 1841, over 57,000 individuals left Irish ports to seek work in Britain (Johnson 1967), and this figure does not take into account the many seasonal workers who travelled through Ireland instead of Britain looking for work. It is possible to see the importance of the income received from harvesting and other agricultural work by considering 1893 estimates of the Congested Districts Board cited by Johnson (1967, p.98). A poor family might be able to earn 17 pounds for the year, 10 pounds of which would come from migratory labour. Although this estimate comes from a somewhat later period, there is little reason to believe that such labour was any less important in the mid-19th century—if anything, the money obtained away from home was probably an even greater proportion of annual income.

Not all of Ireland's poor were Irish speakers, but poverty was especially severe in Irish-speaking areas. Some of these areas (e.g., Kilcommon in northwest County Mayo) were more isolated and were therefore somewhat slower in contributing to the migratory work force (Johnson 1967, p.102). However, some of the less remote regions were sending workers from a fairly early part of the 19th century. For example, Costello and Gallen, two of the eastern baronies of County Mayo, were important sources of migratory labour as early as 1831 according to maps provided by Johnson (1967, p.100) and O'Dowd (1991, p.59). Not surprisingly, Table 1 shows that both of these baronies had a higher proportion of bilingual speakers in comparison with Erris, the barony in which Kilcommon was located.

The destinations varied considerably for workers, but some generalizations are possible. Most workers from Ulster went to Scotland (O'Dowd 1991, p.67), whereas the southwestern counties of Kerry, Cork, and Limerick sent few migrants at all to Britain—most workers from these areas sought work in more prosperous Irish counties such as Wexford (Johnson 1967, pp.102f.). In other cases, the distances travelled

were smaller: Congested District reports cited by Johnson indicate that "a local migration to the more prosperous farms of east Galway was still found and was preferred by the Irish-speaking and still largely self-sufficient community of south-west Galway" (pp.108f.). As with the British destinations, the Irish ones were largely Anglophone: County Wexford had few Irish speakers by the 19th century and the eastern baronies of Galway had far fewer in comparison with the western baronies, although some had large numbers of bilinguals (Fitzgerald 1984, Odlin 1994a).

Students of Irish migration (e.g., Johnson 1967, Ó Grada 1973) have emphasized the continuity of labour patterns from the early to the late 19th century. Hiring fairs in many regions took place at set times, and year after year many of the same workers embarked for harvests in the same areas (young workers no doubt found it helpful to travel with more experienced workers). For better or worse, temporary migration became a cultural institution in many parts of the Gaeltacht. Although the stability of migratory patterns was considerable, changes did occur. One of the most important was the increase in the number of female workers over the century (Bell 1991). Yet as the male/female ratio changed, the absolute number of Irish workers going to Britain declined: by 1910 there were few migrants from most counties, with the notable exception of counties with Gaeltachts (O'Dowd 1991, pp.99-102). To this day some temporary migration from Ireland to Britain takes place, though a more salient pattern in the 20th century has been the permanent settlement of many Irish in cities such as Glasgow and Liverpool.

2.3 Migration and the diffusion of English

Up to this point, the discussion has focused on the demography of temporary migration, with little said about the diffusion of English. The evidence for the linguistic impact of migration comes from a variety of sources which together point to widespread informal second language acquisition that proved effective though far from painless.

Adams's claim about the importance of Scots on the Donegal Gaeltacht is supported by the following observations from Braidwood (1964, p.35):

> If the Donegal Irish had no English they were accustomed to say that they had not the Scots [...]. At the beginning of the century Donegal Irish engaged themselves as farm servants in the Laggan

> district and spoke of 'going up till the Lagan to lift the Scotch,' i.e. to learn English. The west Donegal harvesters apologizing to a traveller for their imperfect English, spoke pure Ayreshire: 'It's the Irish we speak among wursel's, but we hae eneuch Scotch to speak till yer honer.'

The Lagan district, which lies to the east of the high mountains of Donegal, was an early area of settlement by colonists from Scotland, and during the mid-19th century it drew many Irish speakers from the Gaeltachts west of the mountains.[2] From Braidwood's observations, some observers apparently believed that migration to Scotland also played a role. Although the "pure Ayreshire" alleged may not have been widespread, the effects of Scots are evident today in the speech of nearly everyone in Ulster, not just the Scots Irish. How much of the influence of Scots came about from migration to Scotland as opposed to contacts within Ulster is a question that will probably remain impossible to resolve.[3]

Whatever the relative importance of superstrate influence from Ulster and from Scotland, Scots clearly contributed a great deal to the formation of Hiberno-English. Even though the influence of Scots-speaking schoolmasters cannot be ruled out, encounters outside of schools must have played a major role in the diffusion of lexical, syntactic, and phonological characteristics into all varieties of northern Hiberno-English. Scottish characteristics vary by region (Harris 1984a), but some nonstandard constructions are widespread, and some influenced southern as well as northern Hiberno-English. For example, both northern and southern varieties widely use a form of profane negation signalled by *devil*: e.g., *Divil a one ever I seen* (= I never saw one). Although *devil* negation is also found in the dialects of England as well as in Irish (which was also an important influence), the superstrate influence of the Scots vernacular seems undeniable in view of structural similarities and textual evidence described elsewhere (Odlin 1995). A parallel case of superstrate influence is seen in a softened form of negation that was once common in Hiberno-English: e.g., *sorra one o' them was equal to Charlie* (= not one of them was equal ...), where *sorrow* is a euphemism for the Devil. While substrate influence from Irish once again played a role (albeit a problematic one), there is clear evidence of influence from Scots (Odlin 1996).[4] If, as the evidence suggests, vernacular forms of Scots exerted a considerable superstrate influence, there is every reason to suppose that the nonstandard dialects

of England also played a major role in the diffusion of Hiberno-English (cf. Lass 1990a,b, Harris 1984b, 1986, Odlin 1992).

The precise ways in which superstrate influence spread through Ireland will never be fully known as there are no studies that tracked the progress which migrant workers made in their acquisition of English. Nevertheless, various sources provide a useful if fragmented picture of the encounters that enabled language contact to take place. One of the most helpful is by Michael MacGowan (1962), whose school experiences in County Donegal were cited in section 1. The quotations that follow are from the English translation, but the Irish original (MacGabhann 1959) will be cited when necessary. Born in 1865 in the district of Cloghaneely, MacGowan claims to have learned little in school as noted above. In fact, he does not even credit his school with teaching him the alphabet: instead, he learned it informally from an old man who had been in a hedge school. Apart from those in school, MacGowan's first encounters with English speakers appear to have been when he was hired to work on a farm. In 1874 he was brought to Letterkenny, the site of a major hiring fair. He recalls the following encounter with English-speaking farmers, who may well have been Scots Irish:

> The big men from the Lagan were there walking about amongst us and sometimes one of them would come over to us and say something to his companions about us. I remember to this day what one of them said about myself. He came over to me, caught me by the shoulders and shook me well. 'He's a sturdy wee fellow,' he said to the man with him. At the time, I didn't know what the words meant but I remembered them and it wasn't long until I found out.
>
> (MacGowan 1962, p.16)

The words "He's a sturdy wee fella [*sic*]" appear in the Irish version (MacGabhann 1959, p.35), and so there can be little doubt about what MacGowan believes he heard. He had been brought to the fair by his mother, who did not speak English either. An agreement was reached as follows:

> two men came over to my mother and started to make a bargain with her. One of them had plenty of Irish and I think the other man had brought him with him to translate. They offered a wage of a pound for me from then [May] until November. (ibid., p.16)

Paddy O'Donnell, the man from the "Lagan" who hired MacGowan,

actually had his farm in the Glenveagh district of the Donegal mountains. An old woman living in O'Donnell's house spoke "limpid Irish" according to MacGowan (1962, p.18), and the farmer himself seems to have had some command of the language: when he gave instructions to his eight-year-old servant, he apparently did not need a translator, even though the services of a middleman were used at the Letterkenny fair. The farm where MacGowan worked thus seems to have been a bilingual environment, with O'Donnell representing a transitional generation between fluent Irish speakers such as the old lady and monolingual English speakers.

After MacGowan came back to Cloghaneely in November, he returned to school but "didn't learn much" (1962, p.23). Nevertheless, he recalls that by May of the following year, "I was wiser [...] and [...] I understood English better" (ibid., p.24). Unfortunately, he gives no details on how much his service with O'Donnell or other encounters played in this. Once again, he went to the hiring fair in Letterkenny with his mother. This time they stayed with Mary McCaffrey, an Irish-speaking woman from Cloghaneely who lived in the town. Although MacGowan does not say that McCaffrey was bilingual, some of his remarks about her house imply it:

> There was someone there from every district in the county and particularly from the Irish-speaking areas. Everyone from those parts knew that she would speak Irish and those who hadn't much English would make straight for her. (ibid., p.24)

It would seem that McCaffrey catered both to Irish- and English-speaking job seekers. MacGowan contrasts his behavior at the 1875 fair with that of the previous year:

> The year before I was practically hanging out of the tassels of my mother's shawl but this time I was running around on my own and having little conversations in English with the Lagan people. (ibid., p.26)

Even so, he had difficulties:

> Indeed, their accent and idiom was [*sic*] hard to follow: it was not the same as what the master who taught me at school had. When they'd be talking about boys such as myself, 'bairns,' they'd call them. One man was telling about a horse that took fright as she was being led to the fair that morning and what he said was that the animal was 'copin' curly'. Another man averred that he was

'sagged with the rheumatics' and that we were lucky to have 'suchan a brave day'. When I heard all this, and more, I was of the opinion that it would be just as easy for them to understand my Irish as it was for me to make head or tail of their English.

(MacGowan 1962, pp.26-27)

Once again, the Scots words he cites also appear in the Irish original (MacGabhann 1959, p.49). MacGowan is no doubt exaggerating, as is evident from the fact that he could follow conversations well enough to understand the context, whether horses or health or weather was the topic. Such exaggeration makes it conceivable that he also underestimates the role that schooling played in his acquisition of English. If he does underestimate, he would certainly not be the first pupil to do so. On the other hand, his remarks about the 1874 fair cited above make clear that he did not understand the sentence *He's a sturdy wee fellow*, which suggests that he had only a minimal command of English until after the fair, until he benefited, in all likelihood, from the bilingual environment of O'Donnell's farm.

MacGowan's next employment was with a farmer called Sam Duv, whose farm was in Drumgohill, not far from Letterkenny in the middle of a region which was thoroughly Scots Irish. Sam's sister was hard to understand at first, but MacGowan notes the following exchange on his second day:

Jane asked me if I could milk a cow. I told her that I had never been under a cow in my life. 'Well, lazyboots,' she said, 'you can't start to learn early enough. I'll be in charge of you and if you're going to be here, you'll have to be able to get under them. There was never a boy in this house that hadn't to milk.' (MacGowan 1962, p.29)

The Irish version does not have any English words here. For example, we find "a chladhaire" (p.53) instead of "lazyboots". From other remarks of MacGowan, Jane was clearly not an Irish speaker, and so MacGowan is no doubt giving an Irish summary of a fairly complex English exchange, and thus he seems to have understood her fairly well. He likewise understood the Scots of an old man named Billy Craig:

I often heard people say since then that the 'Scots' had no lore or superstitions but I can tell you they're wrong. Billy Craig had plenty of lore and stories just like some of our own people and he was as superstitious as any of the old people that you'd ever meet.

(ibid., pp.31-32)

MacGowan often listened to Billy's stories about fairies and ghosts, and understood them well. When he was out herding,

> There wasn't a bush or hillock around but I'd expect to see one of these little youths [fairies] standing behind it. Maybe it was all these stories of Billy's that made me so nervous in the end.
>
> (MacGowan 1962, p.33)

O'Donnell and Sam Duv were only the first two farmers who employed MacGowan; he worked for another five or six seasons in the Lagan, and then went to Scotland "like most of the younger people of Cloghaneely did at that time" (ibid., p.34). For another five years he went on seasonal work to various parts of the Lowlands. As in the Lagan, farmers in Scotland were not always easy to understand, but MacGowan describes a number of incidents where he nevertheless succeeded in communicating. He reflects on his experiences as a learner:

> It's strange how things run through a person's head at times. I always thought that it was little I had learned at school in Magheraroarty. In spite of that, however, I understood the English language better the last couple of seasons than I did when I started out. (ibid., p.53)

It is not clear whether "seasons" means terms in school or seasons of work in Scotland. In either case, MacGowan recalls that

> I liked when the master would read aloud a poem that we understood and when he'd make us learn bits of it off by heart. He worked hard enough trying to teach us other things as well but I forgot everything except the Catechism and the few bits of poetry. (ibid.)

Once MacGowan learned some English, he was no doubt in a better position to understand what his teacher had to offer. Yet whatever he did manage to understand, much of the exposure that he had to English came about through informal encounters during his service in the Lagan and Scotland.

Since MacGowan's narrative does not focus on how he learned English, the role that bilinguals such as Paddy O'Donnell and Mary McCaffrey played is not clear. Nevertheless, the presence and the power of such individuals in the overall patterns of seasonal labour make it reasonable to suppose that MacGowan found it easier to learn English because of them. As for the power of bilingual individuals, O'Dowd

(1991, p.126) notes that when when workers travelled in groups, they

> frequently had their own spokesman who approached the farmer and agreed upon the rates of wages and the work to be done. This man would usually be the best negotiator as well as the best worker in the group and it was his responsibility to set the pace in the field which the other members of the group would maintain.

Elsewhere O'Dowd refers to such an individual as "a gaffer-type person" (1991, p.327), and she frequently mentions the power that such individuals had, power that was sometimes corrupted when gaffers and farmers colluded to exploit *spalpeens* (i.e., migrant Irish workers). There can be little doubt that much of the power of gaffers came from their ability as negotiators, and that implies they could speak English to farmers and perhaps Irish to any spalpeens who did not know English. MacGowan (1962, p.10) mentions that older members of his own family had been spalpeens in Scotland and that they had suffered from not knowing English. Clearly, a bilingual gaffer would be in a position to influence the lives of other workers, including how much English they learned. Accordingly, there is a likely similarity between the role of gaffers in Britain and that of the Loyalty Islanders described by Keesing (see section 2.1 above).

The difficulties that workers encountered in using language are reflected not only in personal accounts such as MacGowan's but also in much of the folklore connected with seasonal migration. The reflections are in some cases quite oblique, as in the following tale cited by O'Dowd (1991). Three men from Connaught each learned a phrase while looking for work. They came upon a dead man and not long after

> There came up a gentleman ridin' a horse. He says, 'who kilt the man?' 'Us three', says one. 'For what?' says the gentleman. 'For thirty shillings', says the other fellow. 'The three of yiz'll be hung', says the gentleman. 'The divil a doubt I doubt it', says the third fellow. (O'Dowd 1991, p.290)

The story is, of course, implausible as actual history, and indeed shows formulaic elements found widely in international folktales. Yet although the story says more about stereotypes of workers from Connaught than about their actual language, the vernacular used suggests memory for forms such as the *devil* negation in "The divil a doubt I doubt it". Other stories O'Dowd cites involve cases of Irish speakers misunderstanding

what they hear as in the following example. A man in a jaunting cart says to a boy "You're sick," to which the boy replies "Ni ábhar saic atá liom" (It's not material for a sack (saic) I have). The similarity between *sick* and *saic* is part of the intended humor, but such confusions certainly do take place in second language learning. Indeed, some of the stories recalled have a factual basis. Writing of a community in Scotland, Dorian (1980, p.38) observes:

> Many present-day bilinguals tell amusing stories about the difficulties they had with English as youngsters and laugh at the "howlers" that they came out with through insufficient experience with English. One could even acquire a temporary byname thanks to an English blunder. One Golspie bilingual, now a septuagenarian whose English is fluent, was for years called "That's-a-dog-of-me" by a local shopkeeper because of the Gaelic-patterned English she mustered as a young girl to claim the dog that the shopkeeper was trying to chase out of his shop.

Similar stories appear in the archives of the Department of Irish Folklore at University College Dublin.[5]

While most of the accounts discussed so far have focused on the experiences of individual language learners, the overall situation does not seem to be very different. Michael Carduff, a resident of the barony of Erris in County Mayo, provides an account of what people there remember of migrations over the years.[6] Written down around 1950, Carduff's account indicates that Leinster was the earliest destination of seasonal migrants; no date is given, but other parts of the narrative suggest that this migration took place between 1790 and 1840. In any case, it ended when a migrant got into a fight with a local bully and trounced him, the result of which was that "no Mayo man ever dared to show his face as an agricultural labourer there since, and that ended Mayo's migration of harvesters to the plains of Leinster" (p.534). The Famine of 1847 ended migration to Ulster, but there were later migrations to Sligo, Dublin, and eventually to Britain. According to Carduff, 90% of the migrants were Irish monoglots even in the 1880's (p.543). The figures in Table 1 make this claim somewhat suspect since even among people born between 1831 and 1841, bilinguals were in the majority. In any case, Carduff observes that before the Famine it was unusual to migrate to England: one individual who did come back became known as *An Sassenach* (the Saxon) because, apparently, he could speak English, "a language then unknown by the lower classes

in Erris" (p.545).

As the figures in Table 2 indicate, many inhabitants were illiterate, and Carduff recounts a long story about one "semi-illiterate" Erris worker in Scotland who played tricks on an old man completely unable to write (whether or not he spoke English). Like the gaffers described above, this individual took advantage of the situation by filling letters to the old man's family in Erris with preposterous instructions such as "put oats in the bog". From other examples Carduff gives, the letters had instances of substrate influence from Irish, but what is just as significant is the implication that back in Erris there were at least some family members (or friends) who knew English and could read the letters. However much English was learned during migrations, some was picked up closer to home, according to Carduff. He notes that associates of his were sceptical about the role of hedge schools in the diffusion of English. In the opinion of some, smuggling on the coast and employment at a nearby Coastguard station provided more substantial opportunities.

Carduff sees migration as one of the chief causes of the decline of Irish. In the 20th century much of the migration became permanent, with former residents of Erris settling in Scotland and England to take industrial jobs. Along with the resulting depopulation, migration brought "an alien ideology which is completely subversive to our old ideals, language, tradition and even faith itself" (p.526). Other observers also saw in migration a powerful vehicle of cultural change. O'Dowd (1991) cites commentaries including one from County Leitrim: "Each young fellow who went for the first time returned with 'a Scotch accent, an English watch and a silver chain' " (p.292). As in the case of the Pacific Islanders, the diffusion of English entailed other changes as well.

2.4 Some problematic issues

As noted above, the evidence on language and temporary migrations is fragmentary, and it will be helpful to consider some of the circumstances that remain unclear. One is the role of gaffers and others who acted as translators. The evidence cited indicates the presence and social importance of such individuals, but it remains unclear just how far the parallel goes between these intermediaries and the Loyalty Islanders described by Keesing. As for contact with native speakers of English, it is not clear how many opportunities there were for migrants to pick up the superstrate language. The nature of

harvest work meant long hours and frequent movement from one farm to the next. Such conditions along with the low opinion that many in Ireland and Britain had of the migrants, according to O'Dowd, suggest that social isolation would have been a serious obstacle to learning English: it is no wonder that some of MacGowan's relatives came back from Scottish harvests knowing little if anything of the superstrate. Even so, Braidwood's observations and the analysis of MacGowan's experiences indicate that many workers did have opportunities to learn English and that they took advantage of those opportunities.

Apart from speaking with bilingual gaffers or monolingual speakers of English, Irish workers probably used more and more English as the superstrate spread through the Gàeltachts. Again, however, it would be helpful to find actual evidence on this point. Similarly, it would be interesting to know if English ever served as a lingua franca between speakers of Irish and speakers of Scottish Gaelic, who were also frequently employed as harvest labourers (Howatson 1982). The differences between the varieties of the Gaidhealtachd (Gaeltacht) of Lewis, for example, and those of Connaught are every bit as large as the differences between the English of Scotland and of England, and so there may be a parallel between the use of English in Scotland and its use by Pacific Islanders who, as Keesing notes, spoke related but not entirely intelligible languages.

Much of the information in this paper has come from sources dealing with seasonal work in Britain and Ulster. While these sources help to understand the language shift that took place in counties such as Mayo and Donegal, the circumstances in counties such as Cork and Kerry were different. As noted in section 2.1 above, many workers from these counties did not go to Britain but instead to prosperous regions in Munster and Leinster. Just as more information on the particulars of language and migration in these areas would be helpful, it would also be worthwhile to find just how much other forms of employment besides seasonal migration mattered. Irish-speaking girls went into domestic service and, as Carduff mentions, there were occasional jobs to be had with government agencies such as the Coastguards. He also mentions that Irish workers were hired as strikebreakers in Dublin, and the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell observed them playing a similar role in some industrial disputes in England (1855/1985).

The questions raised here indicate how complex the linguistic and historical issues are. In all probability, many of the questions will be only partially answered, but sources that could be helpful for under-

standing the issues have yet to be checked systematically. For example, O'Dowd (1991) shows that the archives of the Department of Irish Folklore contain many kinds of stories connected to misunderstandings due to language. Although many of these stories are formulaic and unhistorical (as the tale of the three Connaught men cited above), a careful check of all stories might unearth some personal accounts comparable to MacGowan's. Along with folklore archives, parish reports and other contemporary documents might also shed further light. Accordingly, it is reasonable to hope that further information will help to resolve some of the issues raised here.

3 Pidginization, creolization and Hiberno-English

Section 2 detailed a number of historical similarities between Hiberno-English and Melanesian Pidgin English. There remains, however, the question of whether the terms *pidginization* and *creolization* are appropriate to describe the diffusion of English in Ireland. Before this question is discussed, it will help to consider some of the ordinary concepts associated with the terms. One recent textbook defines *pidgin* in the following way: "A lingua franca with a highly simplified grammatical structure that has emerged as a mixture of two or more languages and has no native speakers" (O'Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Aronoff 1993, p.591). The same text defines *creole* in a similar way: "A language that has developed from a pidgin to become established as a native language in some speech community" (p.575). Although other textbook definitions of these terms differ somewhat, the glosses cited show notions commonly thought of as essential: a simplified lingua franca with no native speakers in the case of the pidgin, and a nativized variety that has "developed" from a pidgin in the case of a creole. Although these criteria capture what many linguists mean in using the terms, nearly every criterion has been disputed by one creolist or another. These disputes are sometimes merely terminological, but sometimes they go to the heart of the difficulties of constructing a viable model not only of pidginization and creolization but of language contact in any form. The following discussion of Hiberno-English will have to take into account the questionable adequacy of the above definitions. At the same time, the discussion will address some of the problems in what is the best overall model of language contact proposed so far (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988).

3.1 The case for—and against—pidginization and creolization

As readers may have already surmised, the "fit" between Hiberno-English and the conventional notions of pidginization and creolization is not very close. In terms of the above definition, modern Hiberno-English is certainly not a pidgin: it has native speakers and it is no more of a lingua franca than is any other dialect of English. On the other hand, there are structures even in modern Hiberno-English which make the notion of earlier stages of simplification hard to dismiss: e.g. the use of the present simple in contexts where other varieties normally use the present perfect as in *I know his family all me life* (Harris 1984a, p.309). Moreover, there probably once were learners whose speech could be described as "pidginized". Such a conception of pidginization is not unusual in the literature on second language acquisition (e.g., Schumann 1978), and some of the sentences used in *Sir John Oldcastle*, a play dated to about 1600, suggest that there were once Irish speakers who could manage no more than the following kinds of phrases: *is pore Irisman* (= I am a poor Irishman), *is want ludging* (= I want lodging), and *is have no money* (= I have no money) (Bliss 1979, pp.79f.). Yet even though such structures probably characterized the speech of some individuals, they were not adopted as canonical forms. At the very most, one might say that if Hiberno-English was ever a pidgin, it was an unstable one. That is, even if phrases such as *is pore Irisman* were widely used, they did not survive and they are hardly reflected in the speech of recent times.

If Hiberno-English was never a pidgin, it must never have been a creole either, at least by the textbook definition which views all creoles as developments from pidgins. On the other hand, some varieties may qualify as examples of what Thomason and Kaufmann (1988) call "abrupt creolization". The type of language contact they posit is crucial for their overall position that not all human languages can be viewed as products of the standard model of genetic change, which assumes, among other notions, "one parent per language" (ibid., p.8). Abrupt creoles differ from other forms of contact in that

> their origin is nongenetic [...] these extreme cases are ones in which the availability of the TL [target language] is so limited that the shifting speakers have successfully acquired only the vocabulary of the TL, but little or none of its grammar [... they] are probably confined to those creole languages that did not develop directly

> from crystallized pidgins [...]. In these languages the features of the new language do not spread to the TL as a whole but [...] remain [...] confined to a socially and/or geographically isolated sub-group. (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988, p.48)

For Thomason and Kaufmann, examples of abrupt creolization include Portuguese-based creoles in the Gulf of Guinea as well as Tok Pisin and Bislama, two varieties of Melanesian Pidgin English. Present-day Hiberno-English does not closely fit the characterization given by Thomason and Kaufmann, especially not in terms of grammar. The vast majority of grammatical patterns in other varieties of English are also used by speakers of Hiberno-English in its nonstandard as well as standard varieties. On the other hand, there are areas where the grammar of nonstandard varieties differs considerably from other dialects, most notably in the relative infrequency of present perfect and past perfect forms. As noted above, the use of the present simple seems to be a case of a simplification of the English tense system as a result of language contact. On the other hand, the Hiberno-English system also has non-simplified structures, as in the case of the well-known *after* perfect (e.g., *I'm after breaking a shoelace* = I've just broken a shoelace). The *after* perfect is an uncontroversial example of substrate influence from Irish, and there are other possible substitutes for the standard perfect constructions, one of which reflects the Early Modern English superstrate: e.g., *She has the boat sold*, and perhaps the Irish substrate (cf. section 3.2). Apart from these options, speakers may rely on other tense forms such as the past simple (e.g., *I broke a shoelace*). Whatever else in the target language was easy to acquire, perfect forms proved difficult, and so the remarkably different range of perfect constructions in Hiberno-English should be viewed as a case of change involving language contact.

Even though the differences between nonstandard Hiberno-English and other varieties are not as great as those between Melanesian Pidgin English and other nonstandard forms of English, the Hiberno-English perfect is a case of where concepts from second language acquisition must be invoked to explain what proved hard for Irish speakers to master. There are other areas where target features also proved difficult (e.g., interdental fricatives, as discussed in section 3.2 below). The importance of language contact is all the greater, if we accept the reasonable assumption that today's nonstandard English in Ireland is only a shadow of what it once was (cf. Odlin 1996). Work on the English of

the Hebrides indicates that there has been a major generational shift. Sabban (1982) found that bilinguals born before World War I used far more structures that suggest Gaelic substrate influence. Moreover, there is similar evidence of such influence in the speech of elderly Scottish bilinguals who were interviewed extensively in the 1960's and 1970's and who resembled the generation of Irish speakers in the Gaeltachts of the late 19th century (Odlin forthcoming). Extrapolating farther back in time, we can expect that some Irish speakers used forms of English even more different from what has been reliably recorded. Thus even though some regions have long had monoglot speakers of Hiberno-English, the massive bilingualism in the 19th century is compatible with the notion of a markedly different dialect of English being common in the Gaeltachts of the time.

Although the Hiberno-English of those Gaeltachts probably differed in significant ways from what more recent evidence indicates, the argument for abrupt creolization will remain tentative unless texts are found that show structural divergences comparable to those in the Melanesian Pidgin English texts discussed by Keesing (1988). While there is a substantial body of fiction and drama with bilingual Irish characters in the early 19th century, problems of interpretation arise. Keesing has noted comparable problems: observers unskilled in Melanesian Pidgin English often misheard what islanders said, and their colonial biases often kept them from taking seriously the idea that the pidgin was a "real" language. Anyone familiar with the notorious Stage Irishman will see that Keesing's reservations are just as warranted in the case of literary caricatures of Hiberno-English. Even so, literary evidence cannot simply be dismissed. For all his caution, Keesing finds some of the texts reliable enough to draw strong conclusions about substrate influence in islanders' English. Similarly, some literary texts have been invaluable for indicating the presence of structures such as *sorrow* negation, which has all but vanished in the late twentieth century (Odlin 1996). A systematic analysis of Hiberno-English in the literature of the early 19th century is clearly needed.

Unless such a textual analysis indicates a reliable body of evidence comparable to Keesing's, the possibility of creolization should be treated with great caution. Even if reliable textual evidence is found, there are reasons to wonder about the category of abrupt creolization posited by Thomason and Kaufmann. First, there is the question of just how different this category must be from traditional notions of pidginization and creolization. The following quotation suggests some

of the assumptions made:

> we do not believe that an abrupt creole can reasonably be viewed as a changed later form of its vocabulary-base language; there is, in fact, no language that has changed. Instead, an entirely new language—without genetic affiliation—is created by the first members of the new multilingual community, and further developed and stabilized by later members, both children born into the community, and (in many or most cases) newcomers brought in from outside. (Thomason and Kaufmann 1988, pp.165-166)

The first part states essentially the same thing as the earlier quotation did: abrupt creolization involves nongenetic origin. However, the terms "developed and stabilized" make it unclear just what kind of language the earliest speakers are using. If it is relatively undeveloped and unstable, the notion of earlier pidginization seems applicable. Thomason and Kaufmann consider Bislama and Tok Pisin to be abrupt creoles, but it is not clear that they would consider the earlier forms of Melanesian Pidgin English also to be in the same category.

A second problem with abrupt creolization involves the notion of target language. For Thomason and Kaufmann, such creolization results largely from the unavailability of anything in the target language except for vocabulary, as the quote cited earlier in this section states. Unlike Keesing, Thomason and Kaufmann imply that English was the target in the case of Melanesian Pidgin English, as is seen in their use of *TL*. This assumption is correct, but it is probably not unique to pidgins or creoles. The massive language shift that took place in Ireland in the early 19th century led to a situation in which bilingual speakers of Hiberno-English must have been primary models for new learners. The target language that Michael MacGowan encountered was highly variable, ranging from the fragments of English that he seems to have learned in school to the Hiberno-English of his (apparently) bilingual first employer to the Scots of his subsequent employers. In MacGowan's case it would be wrong to say that the target language was unavailable, but his own early years suggest that the variation in the target was not just in terms of Scots vs. Hiberno-English, but also in terms of proficiency. MacGowan's recollection of his early difficulties with English suggest that in those years he himself must have been a bilingual able to model only the most rudimentary forms. For younger and less experienced speakers, the target that MacGowan could model would have been far different from that modelled by the articulate gaffers

described in section 2.3 above. If there were many speakers like the young MacGowan (and most probably there were), the target in Hiberno-English would in some ways resemble the target in Melanesian Pidgin English.

3.2 Hiberno-English and the genetic model of language change

The problems with abrupt creolization noted above may not invalidate the notion, but they do make it advisable to consider closely the implications of the Thomason and Kaufmann classification of language contact. Even though any claim that Hiberno-English is a pidgin or creole is doubtful, there does seem to be good reason to consider its origins as nongenetic. In the Thomason and Kaufmann framework, however, Hiberno-English is a case of "language shift with normal transmission", which is discussed mainly in Chapter Five of their book. "Normal transmission" here means that Hiberno-English is one instance of "those linguistic outcomes which [...] can be interpreted retrospectively within the standard model of genetic relationship" (1988, p.49). In other words, the ontogeny of English in Ireland can be treated in terms of the conventional *Stammbaum* (tree) model of diachrony. Independently of Thomason and Kaufmann, Lass (1990b) adopts just such an approach. For him, Hiberno-English is no different from other "extraterritorial" (i.e. non-British) forms of English ("ETE" for short), which also include American, Australian, and South African varieties, with other dialects being subsumed (e.g., the Canadian variety is considered one form that the American dialect takes). As with the other varieties, Hiberno-English conforms, in the opinion of Lass, to a broad principle: "there is no ETE that is not a dialect of southern [British] English" (1990b, p.249). This claim is, to say the least, breathtaking, but it does offer a logical extension of the Thomason and Kaufmann analysis: if Hiberno-English is a case of "normal transmission", it should be locatable on a *Stammbaum*.

Even though Lass does have evidence (mainly phonological) to support his claim, Hiberno-English poses insuperable problems. Simply put, the geographic variation of Hiberno-English cannot be accounted for merely in terms of the *Stammbaum* model

One difficulty is the issue of variation along a north/south axis. As Lass acknowledges in a note (1990b, p.277), Mid-Ulster English is neither Ulster Scots nor Southern Hiberno-English but instead a mixture of the two. However, the partition of Ulster English is not just between

Mid-Ulster English and Ulster Scots: there is also South Ulster English, according to Harris (1984b), which marks the linguistic frontier between the northern and southern varieties of Hiberno-English (cf. Barry 1983). The existence of South Ulster English belies Lass's impression that there is a neat partition between the northern and southern varieties; on the contrary, Hiberno-English seems to resemble somewhat the dialect continua of mainland Europe and even Britain (Chambers and Trudgill 1980). In other words, the farther north a person goes in Ireland, the more northerly the speech will sound. The existence of a northern as well as a southern variety of Hiberno-English makes it impossible to take seriously Lass's claim that English in Ireland can be seen as simply a throwback to southern British English.

Perhaps the *Stammbaum* analysis (and Lass's claim) might be modified by viewing Mid-Ulster and South Ulster English as throwbacks to Scots. Ulster English would then be a reflex of the northern end of the British dialect continuum and Southern Hiberno-English a reflex of the more southerly British varieties. Although this analysis can clarify some of the regional variation in Hiberno-English, it fails to account for a major source of distinctiveness in the English of Ireland: substrate influence. There is considerable evidence that: 1) northern and southern Hiberno-English have commonalities due not to the superstrate but instead to the Irish substrate; 2) there is significant variation along an east/west axis, a pattern that can only be explained in terms of substrate influence.

Although Irish shows considerable dialectal variation, there are features common to the northern and southern varieties that constitute part of the Celtic substrate in northern as well as southern Hiberno-English. Some of these commonalities can be seen through comparing the English dialects described by Henry (1957) and Ní Ghallchóir (1981). In the part of County Roscommon studied by Henry, the region around Boyle, Irish no doubt survived into the early 20th century (Fitzgerald 1984), and up to 1800 it may have been a region of monoglot Irish speakers (Henry 1957, p.15), although Fitzgerald's estimates suggest otherwise. In any case, the rural setting must have contributed to the preservation of many instances of substrate influence in the speech of the informants Henry interviewed in the 1940s. The Upper Rosses in northern County Donegal, the region studied by Ní Ghallchóir, is still a Gaeltacht (and, incidentally, a district close to where Michael McGowan was born). Consonant with the discussion of northern Donegal in section 2 above, the older people of this region widely speak

Irish (though rarely read or write it) and those "who had spent long periods of employment in Scotland, England or America use English with comparative ease" (Ní Ghallchóir 1981, p.147). In contrast to such individuals, Ní Ghallchóir mentions others of the same generation who

> had acquired English in their youth, when employed away from home, but on returning to their own neighbourhood resumed speaking Irish. It now appears that they feel diffident about their level of performance and competence in English. (ibid.)

In terms of the social setting, Henry's speakers of southern Hiberno-English and Ní Ghallchóir's speakers of a northern variety are quite representative of bilingual and post-bilingual generations involved in the shift from Irish to English. Even though these speakers lived in distinct dialect areas, the following characteristics are common to the more conservative speech varieties in both areas:

Phonological/phonetic characteristics

1. Labiodental fricatives. A common allophone for /f/ in both regions is the bilabial fricative [ɸ]. Likewise, the voiced counterpart /v/ has a bilabial fricative allophone [β]. Irish also has these allophones (Adams 1980/1986).
2. Interdental fricatives reinterpreted as affricates. The fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ of most other dialects of English are not pure continuants in the Rosses or in the Boyle district, but instead are coarticulated with alveolar or dental stops (cf. Henry 1957, p.55, Ní Ghallchóir 1981, p.163). In these as well as in most other studies of Hiberno-English, this reinterpretation is believed to have resulted from the absence of interdentals in Irish.
3. Alveolar fricatives with fortis articulation. In comparison with Received Pronunciation (RP), the English /s/ of the Rosses is, according to Ní Ghallchóir, "produced with more force" (1981, p.164), as is the Irish fricative. Henry's characterization of /s/ is similar: in comparison with RP, the /s/ of the Boyle district is "more intensely articulated" (p.61).
4. Palatalized velar stops. In Hiberno-English as well as in Irish, /k/ and /g/ can take palatalized forms, although in the latter language such forms constitute phonemes. In Hiberno-English the variation is allophonic, yet the range of possible palatalizations goes beyond what is encountered in most English dialects,

most of which, for example, have the /k/ in a palatalized form before a high front vowel as in *key*.

Morphosyntactic characteristics

1. Habitual tenses. In the Boyle district and in the Upper Rosses, the form be need not be accompanied by any auxiliary other than *be* to signal a habitual state of affairs: e.g., *They be clipping them and dipping them* (Ní Ghallchóir 1981, p.157). Although Harris (1984a) has provided strong arguments for superstrate influence, he also notes the likelihood of substrate influence since Irish has a sequence of habitual tenses formally and functionally similar to what is found in Hiberno-English.
2. Prepositional constructions. In both regions the preposition *in* shows at least one identical use which can be attributed to Irish influence: the existential construction seen in *There's no doubt in it* (= There's no doubt) (Henry, p.144).

In all probability, other parallel structures will be found in the Upper Rosses and the Boyle district, but Ní Ghallchóir's study is much less detailed than Henry's, and cases of substrate influence have been more intensively studied in southern varieties of Hiberno-English.

Substrate influence is also a significant factor in understanding the kinds of variation in Hiberno-English between eastern and western regions of the country. Fieldwork by Filppula (1986, 1991, forthcoming) has shown that in the western counties of Clare and Kerry, Irish substrate features are more robust than they are in the eastern county of Wicklow or in Dublin. This robust survival in the West is consonant with the fact that most areas in Kerry and Clare were Gaeltachts until fairly recently. The features that have survived well include:

1. Cleft sentences. Although clefts are found in every English dialect, they are even more common in Ireland and especially so in Filppula's samples from Clare and Kerry. The highly productive cleft constructions of Irish are no doubt the main reason for this prominent feature in Hiberno-English.
2. Absolute constructions. Like clefts, the use of *and* in absolute constructions is found in all English dialects, but especially so in varieties of Hiberno-English in Clare and Kerry: e.g., *He said you could hear them [strange noises] yet, inside in his own house late at night and he in bed* (Filppula 1991, p.618). Although absolute *and* no doubt owes something to superstrate influence, the

findings of Filppula's fieldwork as well as other evidence suggest that Irish absolute constructions with *agus* played a key role in making constructions such as *and he in bed* common in Hiberno-English (cf. Odlin 1992).

3. Perfect constructions. In a recent study, Filppula (forthcoming) finds a tendency for the "extended perfect" construction to be somewhat more common in Clare and Kerry than in Wicklow and Dublin. While Filppula does not consider the trend to be statistically significant, he does see a concomitant trend as strong evidence for substrate influence: the use of *with* in adverbial expressions of time, as in *Hugh Curtin is buried with years* (= has been buried for years). In Irish, the preposition *le* (with) is one of the most common ways to mark adverbials of time. Because *with* adverbials occur only in the speech of his informants from Clare and Kerry, Filppula disputes the position of Harris (1984a), who considers superstrate influence from early Modern English to be a more important factor than the Irish substrate. Although there are problems with either claim, one additional argument for substrate influence is the clear case of the *after* perfect discussed in section 3.1 above.

The evidence from the studies of Henry (1957) and Ní Ghallchóir (1981) indicates that northern and southern Hiberno-English have commonalities due not to the superstrate but instead to the Irish substrate, which suggests that the "transmission" of some features in northern as well as southern Hiberno-English cannot be explained in terms of a *Stammbaum* model. Moreover, Filppula's work shows that for a variety of syntactic structures there is a significant pattern of variation along an east/west axis: speakers in the West of Ireland seem to use clefts, some perfect constructions, and absolutes with *and* more frequently than do speakers in the East. Thus the *Stammbaum*, the explanation for diachronic variation in situations not involving language contact, is unable to account for regional distribution of a number of structures. While the *Stammbaum* falls short in these cases, a unitary explanation is available for the commonalities as well as for the variation: substrate influence.

The structures described by Henry, Ní Ghallchóir, and Filppula are, of course, only a subset of the structures of Hiberno-English, and no doubt many cases are compatible with the *Stammbaum*.In that sense, there is ample justification for the Thomason and Kaufmann category

of "language shift with normal transmission". On the other hand, simplistic characterizations of Hiberno-English as "southern British" fail to account for distinctive structures or distinctive patterns of regional variation within the dialect: in effect, characterizations such as Lass's imply that the varieties of Hiberno-English have as much in common with British varieties as they do with each other. If Hiberno-English cannot be reliably located as a branch of a *Stammbaum*, its origins are nongenetic even though it is dubious that the English of Ireland should be considered a case of what Thomason and Kaufmann (19880 call "abrupt creolization".

Although this discussion may seem to call into question the overall validity of the Thomason and Kaufmann model, the difficulties posed by Hiberno-English can be minimized by judging the applicability of the genetic model in terms of scalar instead of binary values. That is, abrupt creolization can be seen as a case where the *Stammbaum* model applies either weakly or not all while Hiberno-English and similar cases of shift can be seen as instances where the *Stammbaum* model is somewhat applicable but less so than in cases of change that owe little or nothing to language contact. Through this approach, the language mixing seen in Hiberno-English can still be viewed as a distinctive type even while its resemblances to British dialects on the one hand, and to creoles on the other, get the recognition they deserve.

4 Summary

The evidence presented supports the claim that schooling played much less of a role in the shift from Irish to English than some scholars have argued. Census data indicate that in the middle of the 19th century there were many bilinguals who were either completely illiterate or nearly so. Although some of these may have acquired their English simultaneously with Irish, appeals to childhood bilingualism will not explain how families or communities that were once monolingual in Irish eventually became bilingual. If schooling cannot account well for the shift, other institutions must also have played a role. The evidence suggests that seasonal migration was a very important factor in the adoption of English. In the poor and overpopulated Gaeltachts, the income obtained from migratory labour was indispensable for many families. Demographic studies indicate that large numbers of the rural poor participated in seasonal migrations to Scotland and England as well to more prosperous parts of Ireland. Moreover, these studies

indicate that Gaeltachts contributed many workers to the migrations even though some Irish-speaking communities were relatively slow in getting involved in the labour markets outside their regions. The narrative of Michael MacGowan offers a useful perspective on what it was like for an Irish monoglot to work with English speakers: in the course of several seasons MacGowan became bilingual. The spread of English in the Gaeltachts was no doubt accelerated by the widespread seasonal migrations, and this pattern of diffusion shows some striking resemblances to the diffusion of Melanesian Pidgin English in the South Pacific. Although the social circumstances are similar in a number of ways, the structure of Hiberno-English cannot be characterized as a pidgin. It is possible that some Irish speakers never managed to acquire more than a pidginized form of English, but despite some of the structural simplifications seen in modern Hiberno-English, the structural elaboration and the many resemblances to other English dialects make the term *pidginization* inapplicable. A stronger argument can be made for what Thomason and Kaufmann (1988) have called "abrupt creolization", but there are problems with this argument as well, both with the theoretical difficulties posed by the concept of abrupt creolization and with the lack of evidence that the structural divergences in Hiberno-English were ever as great as those attested for Tok Pisin or other contact languages in the Pacific. Accordingly, Hiberno-English is neither a case of pidginization nor, probably, one of creolization. Even so, there is reason to question the category which Thomason and Kaufmann use to characterize English in Ireland: "language shift with normal transmission". If Hiberno-English is classifiable in terms of the genetic model of language change, as Thomason and Kaufmann argue, it should be possible to locate on a conventional *Stammbaum*. However, the effects of substrate influence make it unclear just where on a *Stammbaum* the English of Ireland would belong. The evidence shows commonalities in northern and southern Hiberno-English that are due not to the superstrate but instead to the Irish substrate. Moreover, there is significant variation in the use of some syntactic structures along an east/west axis: speakers in the West of Ireland seem to use clefts, some perfect constructions, and absolutes with *and* more frequently than do speakers in the East. Although these facts may seem to call into question the overall validity of the Thomason and Kaufmann model, Hiberno-English can be seen as a case where the *Stammbaum* model is somewhat applicable but less so than in cases of change that owe little or nothing to language contact.

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Notes

1. The assumption that no Irish monoglots were literate may be occasionally mistaken, but it is in general supported by observations that Irish speaking communities were most often the poorest in the country (cf. Freeman 1957, Ó Cuív 1986).
2. *Lagan* is sometimes spelled *Laggan*, but except for quotations, only the former spelling is used in this paper.
3. Most of the settlers from Scotland involved in the Ulster plantations came from Ayreshire and other southwestern counties (Braidwood 1964), and so it might seem promising to look for Scottish features found in other regions that appear in the Donegal Gaeltacht. After all, migrant workers probably brought home with them characteristics of Scots showing influences from non-southwestern areas where they found work. Such a methodology should not be ruled out before it is tried, but the difficulties should not be underestimated.
4. In both *sorrow* and *devil* negation, substrate influence is also a factor, and both structures thus show important interactions between substrate and superstrate influence (Odlin 1995, 1996).
5. For example, there is a story about how an old man spoke to a lawyer's secretary (Main Manuscripts Collection, Vol. 1642, p.278).
6. This account is in the Main Manuscripts Collection, Vol. 1245, pp.526-553.

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